

President's Corner

Why Join A Bird Club?

by Mark Johnson

Over the years I have asked this question in various forms to better understand what direct value the organization has to its members. Moreover, this question is probably one that that comes up either consciously or unconsciously when writing out that membership check ever year. With declining enrollment and increasing dues, it is an important one if our organization is going to recruit new members and be true to our current constituency.

The technical abilities of our membership are largely outstanding, and we should be proud of that. There are many who join to learn from others. However, what value does this club bring to those who have already tuned identification skills? For many, it's the increased opportunities for camaraderie—the chance to spend more time with friends who have similar interests. The Annual Conference is one such opportunity for old friends to get reacquainted—and the pattern of regular attendees seems to reflect this. I have also

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010

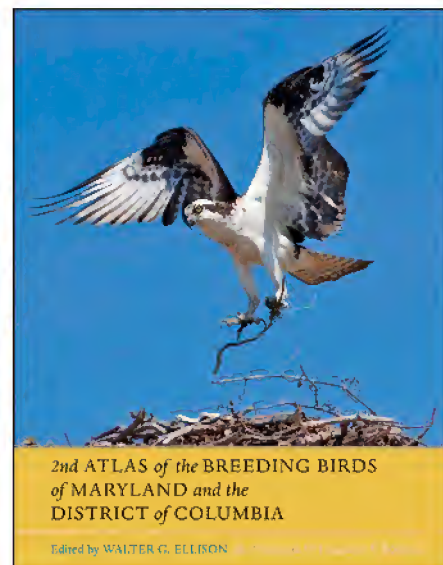
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ATLAS DEBUTS IN NOVEMBER

The *Second Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia* is scheduled to be published in mid-November, even earlier than the MOS Atlas Committee had anticipated.

The *Atlas* is the product of a stupendous volunteer effort, not only by the Atlas Committee but also by County Coordinators and scores of MOS volunteers who systematically surveyed the area's 1,282 "blocks" for each of five years. Thirty area photographers contributed the illustrations. Walter Ellison coordinated the project; the foreword was written by Chan Robbins.

The book is priced at \$75. Johns Hopkins University Press is offering a 25% pre-publication discount; ordering information is available on the MOS web site. Amazon.com is also offering the *Atlas* at a pre-publication rate.



Confirmed in Charles County: The nest-building Osprey gracing the Atlas cover was photographed by George Jett at Blossom Point, Charles County, March 16, 2006.

WHAT'S YOUR LINE?

Whatever your expertise, we have a job for you! Currently MOS—which relies on the generosity of volunteers—is looking for:

- ★ Treasurer
- ★ Education Committee chair
- ★ Environmental Fund for Maryland rep
- ★ Investment Committee chair
- ★ Membership Committee chair

- ★ World Series of Birding Committee chair
- ★ *Yellowthroat* Calendar editor

To volunteer yourself—or one of your talented pals—contact:
President Mark Johnson
(mark.steven.johnson@comcast.net)
or talk to any of the other officers or Board members.

President's Corner *continued from page 1*

noticed that many chapters tend to have two subgroups, one that regularly attends the field trips and one that attends the dinner meetings. Of course, there is some mixing of the two but it seems both provide valuable opportunities to bring avian enthusiasts together.

Chapters and MOS at large are challenged to expand opportunities to bring members together and to recruit new members, and we need to explore new approaches. Our future is tied to bringing in new and younger members; this means providing more learning and beginning birding themes. Targeting youth through YMOS backpacks and birding excursions in the programs developed by George Radcliffe and Wayne Bell has helped bring in kids across the state. To get kids excited about birds or nature in general requires a holistic approach that includes an understanding of child psychology as well as encouragement. Getting kids interested by "setting the hook" with memorable experiences tied to

interesting facts and bringing in peers also helps. Using new means for contact, like Facebook or MySpace, is another way to help get the word out. Also, hands-on visits to banding stations tend to bring birds up close to those initially binocular-challenged.

It is also interesting that not every member is a lister. Some are general naturalists who appreciate the time outdoors and the hike as well as seeing something new for the year. Some are also interested in insects, plants, dragonflies, butterflies, and even fungi. For many of these like-minded people, identification is not enough. They yearn to learn more about life history, ecology, and even anatomy and physiology. Endeavors to

provide this information as an organization could also help in retaining members and hopefully their less-than-zealous spouses.

These are only anecdotal musings, and I look forward to gathering more ideas as I meet with Society members. Please do not hesitate to pass your ideas along!

Also, please consider in helping the Society through one of our vacant positions. Currently, these include treasurer, investment chair, education chair, EFM, membership, World Series of Birding committee, and *Yellowthroat* Calendar editor. No prior experience necessary. We are a volunteer organization and really need everyone's help to continue. Thanks!!

PRESIDENT MARK JOHNSON

...has a lifelong interest in birds; he enjoyed drawing them when he was just a kid (including Evening Grosbeaks at the family's feeder in Harford County in the early '70s). At Bel Air High School he joined a friend in the birdwatching club, and a close-up view of a Black-throated Blue Warbler right outside of school soon hooked him. Camping was a passion, and he and his friends tried to hit every Maryland State Park, mixing in some birding. "Sometimes Chan's guide would word-for-word nail the experience for me," he says.

Art and biology were Mark's two great interests. After a brief career as an electronic technician, he decided to return to college and pursue a vocation in biology. "I knew a career in art was out because it would take something I love and make 'work' out of it." After receiving a BS from Towson in biology, he studied the population ecology of Wood Thrushes at University of Delaware; there Dr. Roland Roth had monitored every breeding pair of Wood Thrush for ~20 years and it was Mark's job to try to understand more about the dynamics of productivity. "Specifically, I investigated age-related aspects of productivity (fledgling production) and three key components, historical territory production, parent defense, and nest concealment. I co-wrote the Wood Thrush account on the *Birds of North America* and another manuscript on the influence of nest concealment on fledgling production."

During this time Mark met the late Barbara Ross (*Yellowthroat* March/April 2009), who became his mentor in bird banding. She introduced him to Chan Robbins and Barbara Dowell at USGS, and for a few weeks during four winters he assisted them banding birds in Guatemala and Belize.

After receiving a MS at UD, Mark worked as an intern for the US Army Environmental Hygiene Agency in the area of ecological risk assessment, "where we tried to understand how chemical exposure affects wildlife." He pursued a Ph.D. at the Virginia-Maryland Veterinary School at Virginia Tech in the area of wildlife toxicology while continuing to work at the Army (now Army Public Health Command), where he is currently the Program Manager for the Health Effects Research Program. "We continue to conduct studies in wildlife toxicology—one of only two government laboratories that conduct such work. We also occasionally conduct autopsies on dead Bald Eagles when they show up on post to understand the cause and how we can mitigate it."

Since 2000 Mark has run a banding station at Eden Mill. He also contributes to the Mid-Atlantic Flyway Report. He ascribes his continuing involvement with MOS and "coordinated" birdwatching to good friends found in the Harford Bird Club. He lives in Baldwin with Denise, his wife of 23 years, and their two sons, Chris, 17, and Ryan, 13.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by September 20, 2010 for the November/December 2010 issue.

*Illustrations pp. 1, 8, 12, 14 © M. Suzanne Probst.
Atlas cover photograph p. 1 © George Jett.
Photograph p. 4 © Alisa Glassman.
Photograph p. 13 (top) © Chris Wright.
Photograph p. 13 (bottom) © Bill Hubick.*



Fall Count 2010



The annual Fall Seasonal Count sponsored by MOS will take place in the MD/DC on the third weekend in September, as customary, either Saturday, September 18 and/or Sunday, September 19. The MOS Board has left the choice of day to local chapters and coordinators.

Everyone is encouraged to participate, regardless of skill level. Every pair of eyes helps, and it is great fun.

The guidelines for this count are the same as those used for all seasonal counts. Local coordinators will assign volunteers to areas, honoring requests whenever possible. Party leaders are responsible for tracking party miles and times, names of participants, and documentation for unusual sightings.

A checklist compilation form is available on the MOS website, in the "Annual Counts" section: <http://www.mdbirds.org/counts/fall/fallcounts.html>. The list includes the species one would expect to find in Maryland during this season. Species requiring further written documentation are noted with asterisks, and all write-ins require full details.

The county coordinators who have volunteered so far are listed on the MOS web site. Anyone already organizing a count or interested in volunteering as a coordinator for another county without a coordinator are encouraged to

contact the state coordinator. In areas without an identified coordinator, individual parties submit their results directly to the statewide coordinator.

If you don't have web access or you are interested in counting in a county without a coordinator, you can contact the state coordinator directly. Individual parties or other groups (e.g., hawk watch sites, field trips) who count in areas without a coordinator, but have data for the count period, are asked to submit their data, along with details on the area that was covered, participants, and coverage statistics, directly to the state coordinator by October 16.

Deadline for submitting completed reports to your county coordinator is no later than October 8, 2010. County compilers are asked to submit compilations to the state coordinator by October 31.

Please plan to join the fun and have a great day birding!

Chuck Stirrat
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The Conservation Connection

by Kurt Schwarz

Another Reason to Keep Fluffy Indoors

Studies at Johns Hopkins University have recently revealed a potential link between cats and human schizophrenia. As recently reported in the *Baltimore Sun* (Aug 1, 2010), cats can carry the microbial parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. *T. gondii* is able to invade the human brain, where it can trigger a chemical imbalance that in some people could result in schizophrenia.

The microbe infects the brains of rodents, altering their behavior and making them more vulnerable to cat predation—for example, by making cat urine attractive to rodents! The microbe then reproduces in the gut of the cat, producing oocysts or eggs, which are shed in the feces. The cat's owner risks being exposed to the microbe when changing and cleaning the litter pan. Apparently, once the cat passes the oocysts, it will be free from re-infection.

Centers for Disease Control data from the first part of the decade indicate that nine percent of people aged 12

to 49 carry this parasite. Fortunately, most people who are infected with *T. gondii* never develop schizophrenia. And the precise link between *T. gondii* and developing schizophrenia is unclear. However, such infections occur in a higher proportion of people with mood disorders than within the general population.

The solution is quite simple. Keep the cat indoors, where it will be unable to catch rodents and potentially infect itself, and possibly, ultimately, you. Of course, if you have mice—or worse—in the house, and you have a cat with reasonably intact hunting instincts, infection may still pose a threat. But in general, keeping the cat indoors should solve this and many other problems. For this and other benefits to your cat and the birds we all love, see the American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors campaign at <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/index.html>.

One way to give you cat the benefit of fresh air while avoiding the dangers of the great outdoors is, if you can afford it, to build a "catio." Of course, you would want to insure it was rodent-free. But you can get some ideas, some that should be relatively inexpensive, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/garden/17catio.html> and <http://catioshowcase.com/>.



Reaching the Next Generation

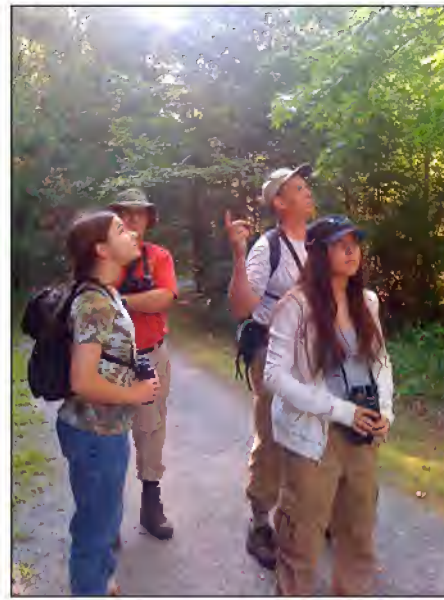
by
George Radcliffe, YMOS
Director, and Wayne Bell

About the same time as the Annual Conference, with its biennial change in MOS administrators, another transition is often taking place. That is the graduation of each “class” of experienced young birders. Off they go to college and/or careers that may or may not be related to birding. Of course, we hope that they have gained a lifelong enthusiasm from their association with the MOS. But their loss threatens the continuity of our youth-oriented programs; the next generation of MOS members is not assured.

Our newest committee, Youth MOS (YMOS) can address this problem in part. While its young members may not have permanent tenure with us, middle and high schoolers especially can and do participate for several years. YMOS itself represents a long-term commitment—multi-generational, if you will—to youth birding. Many MOS chapters have participated in its backpack program, an attempt both to identify promising local young birders and to network them. Recently, YMOS has established a presence on Facebook. Administered by a junior birder (but overseen by members of the senior staff), the page presents field trip schedules and provides a familiar medium young people can use to share interesting information and keep in touch under YMOS auspices.

Although YMOS and its predecessor activities have helped train junior teams for the World Series of Birding and Big Day in Cape May, NJ, the program emphasis is on MD birds and includes both field training and research opportunities. Its progenitor was the 2002-2006 MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas program, truly a gold mine of opportunity for young birders to learn how to identify resident species and to take a “second look” at behavior, and to contribute their “authentic” data to a significant professional resource. As the excellent eBird workshop at the 2010 Annual Conference demonstrated, this rapidly burgeoning on-line resource provides another opportunity for young birders to report and share data from almost any field trip while at the same time contributing to a global information resource on bird distribution, population trends, and migration patterns.

It is in this context that YMOS conducted a new summer field camp, Maryland Birds and Bird Habitats. This residential program was based at Washington College and offered in collaboration with the Center for Environment and Society on June 20-25, 2010, with us as co-directors. We were very pleased to have an enrollment of five students (grades 8-10) from Baltimore, Carroll, and Queen Anne’s Counties plus three educators from the DC and Baltimore areas. We were able to tailor much of the program content to their specific interests and needs.



Two aspiring young birders and one perspiring teacher follow George Radcliffe’s lead toward a spectacular look at a Scarlet Tanager at Adkins Arboretum. Photo courtesy of Alisa Glassman.

The workshop’s theme underscored the relationship between birds, habitats, and the “working landscapes” that are characteristic of Maryland. Each day included a field trip or field exercise, beginning with a “habitat competition” game that pitted forest/wetland against field/scrub lands at the Adkins Arboretum (the forest team won, 34 species vs. 24). Other field trips included a night search for owls and nightjars, a visit to agricultural lands and a bluebird trail in Dorchester County, a waterbird trip to Bombay Hook NWR, and a bird banding demonstration at the Chesapeake Field Research Center (formerly Chino Farms). A final trip to C&O Canal habitats in Montgomery County gave everyone a chance to apply what they had learned about field identification. Total tally for the workshop: 111 species heard, with almost all of them actually seen by the majority of the class. In addition, participants learned how to use hand-held global positioning devices to geo-reference observation locations and were able to practice applying this information in entering their field data on eBird. It was a successful first experience for everyone. One of the educators has produced a workshop video for presentation to the MOS Board of Directors; it will be accessible via the YMOS Facebook page and MOS web site shortly thereafter.

Do these activities guarantee continuity in reaching the next generation? We hope they help by developing a program core that transcends individual youths and, for that matter, the next cadre of MOS administrators. Many MOS chapters have reported outreach to environmental education centers and local youth groups. May the YMOS draw on all our collective successes by providing a research and training context for the young birders who just might become tomorrow’s most dedicated members.

YMOS News

YMOS Backpacks

Again this year YMOS will be giving each chapter a backpack to award to a promising young birder. The pack will contain a pair of Eagle Optics Triumph 8x42 binoculars, Bill Thompson's *Young Birder's Guide*, the MOS "yellow book" *Birds of Maryland*, and a lens pen. Each chapter is asked to contribute a field guide to the pack.

Many of the chapters have devised their own methods of awarding the pack. These include having youths submit a birding list for a period of time, keeping a birding journal with descriptions and drawings, and writing an essay about a favorite bird.

The backpacks will be distributed at the September Board meeting.

YMOS Facebook Page

The MOS Youth group now has its own Facebook page. Developed by youth members and maintained by both staff and youth, the site provides young MOS members with trip information, useful web sites, and information to help them develop as birders. The site also allows MOS youth members to interact with one another and share experiences. To find the site, when in Facebook, search for "Youth Maryland Ornithological Society." Direct any interested youth you know to this site.

YMOS Summer Programs

This past June a group of students and teachers from across the state met at Washington College for the first annual Maryland Birds and Habitats summer workshop. In addition to a wide variety of field activities, the group learned how to collect and report data on eBird. The program will be repeated Jun 19-24, 2011, and application information will be posted on both the MOS web page and the YMOS Facebook page in September.

YMOS Birding Trips and the World Series of Birding

YMOS runs trips during the year for interested youth. Although each chapter offers trips that young people can participate in, YMOS trips provide an opportunity for youth from different chapters to meet and learn together. The trip dates are found on the YMOS Facebook page. The trips are also used to identify and prepare a youth team for the 2011 World Series of Birding in Cape May.

All chapters should actively search for young people in their areas with a particular interest in birds. Get them out on a trip with your chapter, introduce them to the YMOS Facebook page, link them up with a YMOS trip, and direct them to George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com if they would be interested in participating on a World Series of Birding team. Experience is not necessary; love of the natural world is.

Dave Weesner, Washington County, Wins Top State Award

Dave Weesner, a long-time WCBC member and past president, this spring received the Edmund Prince Award, an honor given annually to the State's top park ranger. And when Dave was introduced at the MOS conference dinner, the group greeted him with enthusiastic and sustained applause.

Dave has been a ranger at Washington Monument State Park (where he lives in a ranger residence) since 2006; prior to that he worked as a law enforcement ranger for the Maryland Park Service in the South Mountain Recreation Area (which encompasses Greenbrier, Washington Monument and Gathland state parks, South Mountain State Battlefield, and part of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail).

An enthusiastic bird watcher since childhood, Dave frequently leads bird walks for park visitors. Another of his duties is marking the park's 150 miles of boundaries; tromping through the backcountry brush gives him the opportunity to see lots of birds, especially migrating hawks in spring and fall.

In addition to supervising seasonal park rangers and maintenance staff, Dave works with volunteer groups and Boy Scouts doing service projects in the park. According to the co-worker who nominated him for the award, "He can fix just about anything, give excellent interpretive programs (especially on birding), [and] knows more about the daily operation of the parks than just about anyone."

Several times a year, Dave teaches Washington County elementary school children about pedestrian, bicycle, and outdoor safety. Every few weeks in the summer, he leads a Saturday evening program for campers; he usually talks about birds and wildlife. He also teaches continuing education courses on birding at Hagerstown Community College.

The weekend of the May Count, Dave and his team (including Pol Heiney and Larry Balinsky) earned an Honorable Mention in the Ruth Ann Dean Memorial Birdathon, recording over 100 species.

The Edmund Prince Award is named for Maryland's first park ranger and is meant to honor those who personify the culture, heritage and tradition of the state park service.



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- In May birders typically look for first-of-year sightings in places the birds frequented in prior years. But the search for new arrivals can also lead to some surprises, especially for careful observers who manage to be in the right place at the right time. One such careful observer was Paul Pisano of Arlington, VA who chose to linger at Hains Point in DC for a “seawatch” on the morning of May 8. Before reaching the tip of the point from the channel side he was treated to a great view of a LONG-TAILED JAEGER leisurely soaring upstream over the Potomac River. Quick work with his scope and a good viewing angle revealed a clean dark cap, light yellow throat and upper breast, chocolate brown wings and upper body, and a long, pointed tail that was nearly as long as the rest of the bird. And then the bird was gone, pushed upstream by the wind until fully obscured by shoreline trees. Though he alerted some birders upstream to be on the lookout, there were no additional reports.
- Hains Point continued to be a hotspot throughout May. On May 15 Gary Allport of DC reported a first-year male PAINTED BUNTING at the Hains Point maintenance yard; attempts to relocate this bird were not successful. On May 23 Paul Pisano and Frank Hawkins caught good views of a flock of 25 WHIMBREL flying south over the Potomac near the tip of Hains Point. These birds were so low that their call notes were audible. They circled a few times, then passed above the airport and became lost in the clouds as they proceeded downstream above the river.
- In early May several phalaropes were found at mid-shore sites. On May 3 Mike Ostrowski of Montgomery County discovered a female WILSON’S PHALAROPE at Blackwater NWR, in a rain-filled pond along Key Wallace Drive; later attempts to relocate the bird were not successful. On May 5 Hans Holbrook of Crofton found another female WILSON’S in a rainwater pond north of Sudlersville in Queen Anne’s County; this bird stayed around for the next several days and granted excellent views to many birders of the region. On May 10 Hans found yet another phalarope, a RED-NECKED PHALAROPE, at Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot County. Hans quickly circulated the sighting report, making it possible for several birders to share the enjoyment. The bird stayed through much of the day, but in early evening it was flushed by a large snapping turtle and was not seen again.
- Birding in June at the Ocean City Inlet yielded a WILSON’S STORM-PETREL on June 15. Kevin Graff of Harford County found this bird while getting some birding in during the annual Firefighters’ Convention. On June 28 several birders observed four COMMON EIDERS at the Inlet; Ron Gutberlet of Salisbury provided the report.
- One of the best finds of the summer was an ARCTIC TERN that Dave Czaplak discovered near Violette’s Lock in Montgomery County on June 29. Adding to the delight, the bird stayed in the same general area for several days, allowing good views for many birders and some quite good photos.
- July birding got off to a great start with a July 4 report of five BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS in a pond in Arbutus, Baltimore County. The first report came from Sandra Byrd of Baltimore, who had heard via Brian Sykes that people were visiting the Arbutus site and photographing these unusual birds. The pond being used by the birds was on the private property of Charlestown Retirement Community, but they could be observed from several locations in an adjacent shopping center. Word spread quickly, and many birders filed reports over the next few days, carefully noting hind toe status that supported the likelihood of these birds being wild. Successful viewing continued until at least July 7. Over the past several years visits by vagrant BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS seem to have become a bit more regular.
- On July 10, Dave Czaplak found five AMERICAN AVOCETS on the Potomac River near Violette’s Lock. Later the same morning John Hubbell of DC and Robert Ostrowski reported five AMERICAN AVOCETS at the Brown Station Road pond in Prince George’s County. The two sites are certainly close enough to support the idea that the same group of AVOCETS visited both counties that day. It seems to have been a good year for AVOCETS in the region, for on July 15 Jan Reese of St. Michaels, MD observed 21 of them in the ponds of Poplar Island in Talbot County.
- The July visitor that gave the most joy to the most viewers was a SANDHILL CRANE that showed up in Elkton, Cecil County, on July 13. As is often the case with SANDHILL CRANES, non-birders were the first to find the bird. Pat Valdata of Elkton learned that the bird was being seen and photographed in Eder Park and promptly passed the word to the birding community. At first the bird was elusive, but within a few days this bird demonstrated little fear of adults with cameras and scopes. It was quite skittish in the presence of children and dogs, but otherwise would even approach people in cars, as if it had been accustomed to living in a densely populated area (such as Florida, of course). This bird was been seen at Eder Park nearly every day through July 26.
- On July 20, perhaps confused by the high temperatures of our region, an immature WHITE IBIS showed up in Washington County. Jim Green, a diligent birder from Montgomery County, found the bird in a pond near Rte 66 north of I-70; it stayed around to entertain birders, especially county listers, until July 24. On July 21, Dave Czaplak yet again discovered a prize at Violette’s Lock, an immature WHITE IBIS. Although this bird lingered less than an hour before heading upstream, on July 24 an immature WHITE IBIS—thought to be the same bird—was tracked down by Robert Ostrowski a little more than a mile above Riley’s Lock; it was there again the following day.

MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT AS OF JULY 21, 2010

BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The MD/DCRC has reached the following record decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review packages 130 through 132.

MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*. New “state” species include Allen’s Hummingbird for Maryland, bringing the total number of species on the Official List of the Birds of Maryland to 436.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee’s web pages: <http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

Yellow-nosed Albatross, *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*

[MD/2009-055]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin,
Worcester County

06-Jun-2009

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

[MD/2009-059]

Violette’s Lock, Seneca, Montgomery County
17-Jun-2009 through 30-Jun-2009

White-faced Ibis, *Plegadis chihi* [MD/2009-086]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin,
Worcester County

11-Oct-2009

Roseate Spoonbill, *Platalea ajaja* [MD/2009-061]

146th Street, Ocean City, Worcester County
24-Jun-2009 through 01-Jul-2009

Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2009-097]

Cambridge, Dorchester County
17-Nov-2009

“European” Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*

[MD/2009-047]

Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin,
Worcester County

24-Apr-2009

White-winged Dove, *Zenaida asiatica* [MD/2000-030]

Stoney Ridge Farm, Dailsville, Dorchester County
04-Nov-1977

Allen’s Hummingbird, *Selasphorus sasin* [MD/2008-166]

Prince Frederick, Calvert County
22-Dec-2008 through 29-Dec-2008

Say’s Phoebe, *Sayornis saya* [MD/2009-087]

Foreman’s Branch Bird Observatory, Kingston, Queen
Anne’s County
07-Oct-2009

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus forficatus* [MD/2009-054]

Eastern Neck NWR, Rock Hall, Kent County
26-May-2009 through 27-May-2009

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus forficatus* [MD/2009-081]

Millington Road, Sudlersville, Queen Anne’s County
22-Aug-2009 through 23-Sep-2009

Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* [MD/2008-047]

Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Prince George’s County
16-May-2008 through 17-May-2008

Loggerhead Shrike, *Lanius ludovicianus* [MD/2009-078]

Sedgwick Way, Hagerstown, Washington County
05-Aug-2009 through 05-Sep-2009

Black-throated Gray Warbler, *Dendroica nigrescens*

[MD/2008-086]

Kinder Farm Park, Millersville, Anne Arundel County
13-Oct-2008

Harris’s Sparrow, *Zonotrichia querula* [MD/2009-034]

Columbia, Howard County
19-Mar-2009 through 04-May-2009

Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta* [MD/2008-064]

Hurlock, Dorchester County
31-Aug-2008 through 13-Sep-2008

MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

“Great White” Heron, *Ardea herodias occidentalis*

[MD/2009-052]

Chestertown, Kent County
30-Apr-2009

“Western” White-fronted Goose, *Anser albifrons frontalis/*

gambeli [MD/2007-138]

Little Meadows Lake, Grantsville, Garrett County
26-Nov-2007

Thick-billed Murre, *Uria lomvia* [MD/2009-024]

Ocean City Inlet, Ocean City, Worcester County
19-Feb-2004

Black Guillemot, *Cepphus grylle* [MD/2009-025]

Ocean City Inlet, Ocean City, Worcester County
16-Feb-2004

Ruddy Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon montana* [MD/2008-033]

Fort McHenry, Baltimore City, Baltimore County
05-Mar-2008

Cave Swallow, *Petrochelidon fulva* [MD/2007-127]

Havre de Grace, Harford County
15-Nov-2007

Le Conte’s Sparrow, *Ammodramus leconteii* [MD/2001-028]

Girdletree, Worcester County
11-Nov-2000

Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta* [MD/2008-065]

Swindler’s Park, Berlin, Worcester County
28-Dec-2007



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Pierre and Danalee Henkart departed snowy Maryland for a tour of Panama in February, hitting some nice beach resorts as well as a great Canal transit. “Although our guide was only modestly inclined towards natural history, our island tour in Bocas del Toro took us to nesting Red-billed Tropicbirds and Brown Boobies, and we saw plenty of great neotropical birds at all our stops by roaming on our own. We’d heard about the great rainforest birding at Pipeline Road near Gamboa, and we reserved a few days after the end of the tour to bird there, staying at a B&B a 20-minute walk (or 5-minute ride) away. We walked Pipeline Road on our own on each of two days, encountering guided birder groups from the nearby Canopy Tower. The roadway provided welcome visibility for spotting birds in dense vegetation, and we saw dozens of rainforest species, including Fasciated Antshrike and several antwrens, Crimson-crested and Lineated Woodpeckers, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, Violaceous and White-tailed Trogons, Bay Wren, and Black-breasted Puffbird, to name a few. Of course the howler and white-faced Capuchin monkeys, abundant Morpho butterflies, and some spectacular orchids added to the experience. The highlight was seeing the specialized cohort of birds actively

foraging low to the ground over an ant swarm: Ocellated and Bicolored Antbirds, Gray-headed Tanager, and Plain-brown Woodcreeper. Although Panama’s ecotourist infrastructure doesn’t match Costa Rica’s, and sandflies and chiggers were intimately experienced, this is a great destination for any nature lover.”

—*Pierre Henkart*

Leo Weigant spent three and a half days birding along the Rio Grande near Brownsville, Texas, in early June. It turned out to be a great trip despite the fact that two favorite spots (Sabal Palm and the campground south of Falcon Dam) were closed “for national security reasons”—i.e., “The Fence.” Getting up early each morning, he managed to almost double his hoped-for goal of 30 new species for 2010, even with spending the afternoons in an air-conditioned siesta. The very first day a Lesser Nighthawk fluttered up from the grass to alight on his car. Sunrise at Santa Ana NWR meant breaking the night’s spider webs on the trails—and seeing Olive Sparrows, Clay-colored Thrushes, and several *Myiarchus* flycatchers. That evening, at the Valley Nature Center in Weslaco, he checked out Kiskadees, Buff-bellied Hummer, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (at least 24 nests), and a flock of Red-crowned Parrots coming in to roost like raucous teen-agers. The next day at Boca Chica on the Gulf, the lagoon just before the beach drew dancing Reddish Egrets, White-faced Ibis, Chihuahuan Raven, and a single Wilson’s Plover—plus a White-tailed Hawk perched on an old wooden utility pole; many Black Terns cruised the beach. Later at the South Padre Island Birding Center he saw two families of chicks in the marsh: fuzzy black balls of Clapper Rails and mottled gray fuzz balls on long legs

watched over by Black-necked Stilt parents. At Laguna Atascosa NWR an American Bittern sat, unconcerned, on a tree right by the entrance to the Wildlife Drive; the last two miles were filled with Wilson’s Plovers, Bronzed Cowbirds, Green Jays, and Couch’s Kingbirds. Bentsen-Rio Grande SP at sunrise offered Groove-billed Anis nesting in the garden by the gift shop, and the usual sought-fors: Black-crested Titmice, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, and a male Altamira Oriole bringing food to the 2-foot-long “sock” of a nest. Later at the Hawk Tower was the Bird-of-the-Trip, a fly-over Red-billed Pigeon, only the third Leo had seen in more than 20 years of birding Texas. On the way back, “Sparrow Alley” north of La Joya offered Pyrrhuloxia sitting near cardinals, a Lark Sparrow, 4 Caracaras, and a Swainson’s Hawk. He spent his last morning at Estero Llano Grande SP south of Weslaco; no one else showed up for a scheduled bird walk, so Leo got a special tour into some back places inhabited by a half-dozen Least Bitterns, alligators, White-tailed Kite, Wood Storks, and Anhinga; a fly-by, in bright sunlight, chocolate-colored Chuck-will’s-widow surprised him by its large size. It was a satisfied trip home—spent updating records, of course.

—*Leo Weigant*

CAROLINE COUNTY

Caroline County Bird Club is proud to announce that its first-ever Youth Birdwatching Backpack Contest was a success. Open to all youth ages 10 through 17 who were residents of Caroline County, the contest required participants to note date, name of species, habitat, and location (within Caroline County). The winner, 14-year-old *Peter Anderson*, was awarded a YMOS backpack, provided by MOS, on July 8. A true

novice at birding, Peter listed 27 bird species, including some firsts found during a bird walk at Tuckahoe SP with leader *Danny Poet*. Both Peter and his mother, *Lisa*, have shown a real appreciation and enthusiasm for birding. (Lisa is a biology teacher at North Carolina High School and very active with after-school environmental clubs.) We hope to see both of them join us for future birding ventures. We would like to thank other MOS Bird Clubs for great ideas for youth backpack contests. Next, we hope to work with Camp Todd Ranger Bob Foote to create a Camp Todd birding badge and perhaps tie in a youth backpack as a prize.

—*Debby Bennett*

CARROLL COUNTY

Maureen and Dave Harvey went on a birding tour to Spain, then spent four days birding in Israel before attending an International Submarine Veterans Congress in Netanya, Israel. They saw 170 species in Spain and 95 in Israel. "While birding back roads in Israel, we came across signs reading 'Danger: Mines.' You become very careful when chasing birds under these circumstances."

—*Dave Harvey*

HARFORD COUNTY

Nine members of the Harford Bird Club—*Dennis Kirkwood, Volney Ford, Elaine Beery, Marty Crouse, Bob and Susan Hood, Joe and Melody Stevens, and Jane Scocca*—took a 12-day tour of South and West Texas in late June and early July. "We side-stepped the hurricane, which actually made the temperatures more pleasant. Several participants got over 100 life birds in this unique habitat, and the total trip list was 184 species. Highlights included Colima Warbler, Black-chinned Sparrow, Lucifer Hummingbird, Muscovy Duck,

White-collared Seedeater, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, and Tropical Parula. We covered 2,450 miles of Texas, from Big Bend and the Davis Mountains to Brownsville, starting and ending in San Antonio."

—*Dennis Kirkwood*

As part of the MOS outreach to youth, Harford Bird Club held its first youth birding contest. Youngsters were required to provide brief documentation of each species they found and to describe the type of habitat. The two winners were *Colin Mosley* and *Matt Addicks*, and they both were awarded an MOS Birding Backpack at the club's summer social at Anita Leight Estuary Center. We hope to see them soon on field trips.

—*Jean Wheeler*

HOWARD COUNTY

Lisa and Lou Colangelo made their first trip to Tuscon, AZ in April, and every bird was a life bird for Lisa. She was able to add the Curved-bill Thrasher, Cactus Wren, Verdin, Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, and Lesser Goldfinch to her life list from the comfort of her host's patio. A short walk from the house produced a Gambel's Quail and a Greater Roadrunner. A field trip to Sabino Canyon added Broad-billed and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. Karchner's Caverns and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum were also part of the itinerary. The coyote serenade outside of their back door was a special bonus.

—*Kate Tufts*

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Stephanie Lovell traveled to Alaska in June with Victor Emanuel Nature Tours. Starting in Anchorage, her trip continued to Nome, Seward-Kenai fiord, and Denali, and ended with a two-day extension to Barrow. The weather was a mixture of rain,

fog, and sun with temps in the 40's to 50's but dipping to the 30's in Barrow. Leaders Barry Zimmer and Brennan Mulrooney delivered the birds! Fantastic views of Bluethroat in Nome, Kittlitz's Murrelet (Brennan's 700th bird) in the Kenai Fiord, four Bristle-thighed Curlews on very difficult tundra terrain, twirling Red Phalaropes in bright breeding plumage with babies galore, hooting calls of the Pectoral Sandpiper, three species of jaeger, all four eider species, a rare Arctic Loon, and an Aleutian Tern. The bus ride through Denali yielded all five majors: caribou, grizzly, Dall sheep, wolf, and moose—plus a Great Horned Owl with chick and three Northern Hawk Owls. "It was a terrific trip and added 21 birds to my life list."

—*Stephanie Lovell*

In mid-June *Don and Sherry Messersmith* were invited to Wisconsin by one of Don's students to see two of America's rarest birds. For the last 3 or 4 years Kirtland's Warblers have been nesting in Wisconsin in Jack Pine habitats that they regularly use in Central Michigan, where Don first saw them in 1961. Through special arrangements with the Wisconsin DNR, a biologist led them to a singing male that they observed for several minutes; this is one of about 20 now known to be in Wisconsin. The next day at Necedah NWR, the Messersmiths observed Whooping Cranes, which are now nesting and beginning to raise young there. This successful reintroduction of cranes was made possible through several organizations, including the International Crane Foundation, which recently recognized Don for his help in organizing an expedition to Lake Poyang in China to help rediscover the wintering grounds of the rare Siberian Cranes.

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Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper made their second trip to Bhutan this spring. “Our first trip there (in 2005) was in late winter, when we enjoyed great views of rare Black-necked Cranes and huge mixed wintering flocks,” Gail wrote. “But we missed many breeding species and migrants so decided we had to go back in spring. A tribute to this place is that almost all of our original group from ‘05 also repeated! Again we arranged everything (as a private tour) through Bhutan Birding and Heritage Travels. Our guide was Chubzang Tangbi, a young man now studying in Wales who returned to Bhutan to lead our trip. Our field crew contained some good birders as well, so we had lots of eyes. We saw over 280 species in 22 days. Highlights included all of Bhutan’s “big three”: Beautiful Nuthatch, Ward’s Trogon, and Satyr Tragopan, with multiples of each—plus Wedge-billed (Sikkim), Long-billed, and Rufous-throated Wren-Babblers, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Black-necked Crane, Black-tailed Crake, Ibisbill, Pallas’s Fish-Eagle, Himalayan Monal, Blood Pheasant, etc.

“We did notice many changes in the country since our first visit five years ago. There is a lot of construction (hotels, hydroelectric plants, etc) and many more cars and trucks on the roads. Most of the local people have mobile phones, and satellite television is everywhere. (The country didn’t have TV until 1999!) Most importantly, Bhutan is now the world’s newest democracy, having established a parliamentary system of government with a new, young king since our first visit. The goal of the country remains the concept of Gross National Happiness. Bhutan is still a brilliant place to visit. Most of the development is in the more populous western portion of the country; the

eastern and southern regions have changed very little. The forest still extends as far as the eye can see and per the new Bhutanese Constitution, it should remain so into the future.”

—*Gail Mackiernan*

TRI-COUNTY

Members of Tri-County headed far north this summer. During the last week of May and the first week of June, *Carol Broderick* was at the Pribilofs and Gambell hoping to see rarities blown in from the west. Unfortunately, there were 50 mph winds from the east most days (same thing happened to me last year!). Being in the Bering Sea, though, some birds were tough enough to fly and we did get to see breeding Stellar’s and Spectacled Eiders, Lesser Sand-Plover, Common Ringed Plover, Ivory Gull, Brambling, and Rustic Bunting. Also, it was fun to meet MOS member *Jay Sheppard* for the first time. He was gallant enough to pull me from a deep hole in which I was sinking fast. Thanks, Jay.

Later in June, *Sam Dyke* and *JoAnn and Paul Wilbur* took a 15-day Bering Sea cruise. They boarded the *Clipper Odyssey* at Nome and visited or landed on King Island (Russia), Gambell, Hall and St. Matthews Islands, the Pribilofs, the Baby Islands, and then eastward along the Alaska peninsula to Seward. The birding highlights were numerous: Red-faced Cormorants, Red-legged Kittiwakes, Ivory Gull, Aleutian Terns, Whiskered Auklets, and McKay’s Buntings—with a continuous backdrop of uncountable numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes, murrelets, guillemots, auklets, and puffins. The trip finale was a motor-coach trip through Denali National Park with two days at Kantishna. It was difficult to focus on Golden Eagles and Gyrfalcons when wolves, grizzly bears, moose, caribou, and Dall sheep

were in view. What a trip! All I can say is start saving your money!

—*Carol Broderick*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

On May 21, a group from the WCBC—*Ann Mitchell, Anna Hutzell, Doris Berger, and Shirley Ford*—traveled to Delaware to see the horseshoe crab/Red Knot spring spectacle. This year the Red Knots were there, smaller groups divided up among numerous locations, and they were feasting on horseshoe crab eggs. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the DuPont Nature Center located at the edge of a harbor where the Mispillion River empties into the Delaware Bay. The Center has a nice observation deck for looking out over the water to see shorebirds. After leaving the Nature Center, one more surprising sight to behold—a Clapper Rail taking a quick bath on the side of the road; it shook off and ran back into the grassy reeds as fast as it could!

Just a few months earlier, in February 2010, 14 members and friends of the Washington County Bird Club, including *Linda and Bruce Field, Mark and Heather Abdy, Tammy and Paul Needy, Anna and Doug Hutzell, and Shirley Ford* traveled to Costa Rica for a week-long birding trip. This was the second visit for most of the travelers, who last year had birded in the northern lowlands and the southern mountains. This trip concentrated on the Arenal Volcano area and the Pacific coast. The group’s total species count was 238 and included an unusual sighting of a Black-crested Coquette. Birding by boat along two rivers provided them with an excellent view of five species of Kingfisher, missing only the Green-and-rufous. Also missed were the two snowstorms that buried the Washington area with nearly 2 feet of snow.

—*Linda Field*

2010 MOS CONFERENCE

JUNE 11-13

WASHINGTON COLLEGE, CHESTERTOWN

Here are some of the words that come to mind describing the 2010 conference for me. **Cozy** is a good way to portray 2010, with 177 people registered; seeing old friends and making new is still one of the major reasons people attend. **Informative** with Doug Gill's Chino Farms update, Marshall Iliff's eBird workshop, and the research posters. **Exhilarating** applies when talking about field trips; almost everyone's favorite conference activity. **Appreciative** for two new 50-year members; for the Holiday Inn Express' giving access to the Tufted Duck; for Emy Holdridge's years of service as MOS Treasurer; for all of our conference volunteers and field trips leaders.

Friday night's keynote address by *Doug Gill* was a highlight. Everyone was eager for an update on his Chino Farms project, and we weren't disappointed. His enthusiasm for the project is contagious. The research team has encountered some setbacks but is also making important discoveries about grassland restoration. We were extremely lucky to have Chino Farms located close to the conference and, with field trips led by Doug Gill, to be able to tour the area for a first-hand look at the project—and its grassland birds.

On Friday afternoon *Marshall Iliff* presided over an eBird Workshop. As it was located in one of the college's theater areas, attendance was unlimited; conference-goers were encouraged to drop in at any time, even after a Saturday afternoon field trip that ended early, and many took advantage of this. Quite a few people

made a point of saying how much they learned and enjoyed Marshall's presentation.

Kathy Calvert did a magnificent job of arranging field trips. St. Paul's Church and millpond led by *Jan Reese*, Shehan Audubon Sanctuary led by *Vince De Sanctis*, and Libby's Nature Trail/Merkle farm led by *Gemma Radko* were trips new to the conference this year. *Wayne Bell* was able to arrange birding trips to Royal Swan Farm and Andelot Farm, both private properties. There were listers' trips to Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne Counties.

We missed having a nature store this year. We were looking forward to having *Charles Studholme* of One Good Tern in Alexandria. I have been told this is one of the best birding stores in the DC area, with an excellent stock of optics. Unfortunately, I got a call shortly before the conference; Charles had ruptured a tendon in his knee and was unable to participate. Hopefully we can arrange for him to be with us at WISP next year.

As to the Silent Auction and Raffle, *Maryanne Dolan* performed her usual magic with the help of volunteers, including her core group—*Tom and Joy Loomis* and *Gail Regester*. Thanks to their efforts, Echo Hill Outdoor School received a check for \$1,101. (Maryanne is already scouting for quality items for our May 2011 conference at WISP. She may be contacted at Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.)

At Saturday evening's dinner and Business Meeting, *Wayne Bell*, MOS President, presented an array of awards. *Emy Holdridge* was given a special award in appreciation of her

years of service as MOS Treasurer. Another special award went to the Holiday Inn Express at Kent Narrows, acknowledging and thanking them for giving birders access to the Tufted Duck. *Don Messersmith*, MOS Historian, had certificates and pins for two new 50-year MOS members: *Burton Alexander*, Baltimore Bird Club, was unable to attend, but happily *William Scudder*, Caroline Bird Club, joined us for dinner.

A special thanks to *Bob Ringler*, who led what has become his traditional butterfly field trip, a highlight for many, on Friday—then rose early on Saturday for a trip to the Pacific Northwest. In Bob's absence, *Wayne Bell* conducted Sunday's bird tally, which recorded 152 species. One of the highlights was a Little Gull seen on *Marcia Watson's* and *Gene Scarpula's* trip to Bombay Hook NWR. Another highlight, as posted by *Joe Hanfman* on MDOsprey, was seeing how excited Doug Gill was to find an Eastern Meadowlark, which has been uncommon at Chino Farms.

We had a great conference! Many thanks to everyone who helped make it a success. Join us next year May 20-22, 2011 at WISP in Garrett County.

—*Janet Shields*
Chair, Conference Committee

The Birder's Vest

by
Rick Sussman



"It's in the Bag"

Call it a gear bag, a satchel, a man purse, or whatever, Indiana Jones carried one and that's good enough for me! I've been carrying a shoulder bag for more than 25 years, always some variation of a postman's bag, because as a birder I never like being without my binoculars. Though I have several backpacks, I find I don't like their double straps. They are also roomier than I like, tempting me either to haul too much unnecessary gear or to carry around a lot of empty space. Hip-packs are another alternative but at the other extreme; I find they're generally not roomy enough. I like a bag that has, at minimum, space for my binoculars, a book or field guide (or even my Kindle), eyeglasses case, wallet, cell phone, pen and paper, and maybe a point-and-shoot camera. And I prefer leather, though there are certainly many fine fabric bags available.

There are very few birder-specific bags on the market. Jansport used to make one called the Roadrunner that was designed with birders in mind. I was lucky enough to purchase one from a small optics company in Ohio before they were discontinued. It is a single-strap cordura nylon bag with two roomy pockets for binoculars and a couple of field guides as well as several smaller pockets for accessories, and it has two deep round side pockets for a

large water bottle and maybe a long camera lens. There is another small Velcroed pocket along the strap for a phone or digital voice recorder or small camera. The bag is designed to hug your hip in a wrap-around style which keeps it close to the body and prevents it from swaying when you walk—a feature unique to this bag. It sold for around \$50 but as it is no longer made, eBay may be the only hope of finding one.

Recently I have switched to a leather satchel made in India from camel hide, sold online by Far Horizon Traders. They have a large selection of messenger-style bags, travel satchels, and other styles and their prices are good. I bought a medium-sized messenger bag big enough for my binoculars and all my other daily essential gear for just under \$65.

A short list of other low- to medium-priced bags would include:

- The National Geographic Society store sells an Explorer Shoulder Bag at around \$125. Smaller and larger versions are also available.
- The Territory Ahead has a Guy Stuff Travel Bag at \$99 that looks like a great deal on a great bag.
- Duluth Pack Company sells a few nice-looking, versatile bags including the Duluth Pack Haversack for \$100 and the Field Satchel, which is a bit larger, for \$120, both made in the U.S.A.
- L. L. Bean markets various messenger bags, nicely styled and varying in price, with lifetime guarantees.
- Timbuk2 makes several style messenger-type bags, all great quality (I have one), at reasonable prices.

At the higher end, Roots sells a variety of leather bags priced from the mid \$200s to low \$400s. And a

company called Renaissance Art (Fine Handcrafted Leather Books) sells their Essential Satchel and Adventure Satchel, medium to large in size and priced \$200-\$400.

When traveling by train or plane, I sometimes switch over to a roomier leather bag as a carry-on. I have two that I alternate between depending on how much room I need. I use my Levenger Livingstone Gear Pack when I want a little extra room for a travel guide or for souvenir shopping in far-off places. For even more room, I use a bag I first saw in a luggage store in Manhattan made in Italy by Tuscany Leather (Valentino model). I purchased mine online directly from the manufacturer for just over \$300. They have an ever-changing array of models so check frequently; it seems my bag is no longer available. These are heirloom quality bags and though not cheap, are so well made they should last a lifetime.

For a more rugged look, try Saddleback Leather Company. They have a line of rather expensive leather satchels and messenger bags and a fun-to-browse web site. Their bags carry a 100-year guarantee!

Think of the satchel as an extension of the birder's vest, a place to carry essential gear for your day trips or worldly travels. You can personalize it too, as you would your favorite birding hat, with pins or patches from all the great places you visit.

Neighboring Red-cockaded Woodpeckers

The Virginia Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve southeast of Richmond shelters the most northerly nesting colony of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the Atlantic region. In mid-May four Montgomery members were invited by the Conservancy to see the birds while they were feeding nestlings, and thus visible continuously during the day. *Chris Wright, Helen Patton, Steve Pretl, and Sally Weschler* were escorted deep into the pine forest by their hosts, Conservancy staffers *Brian van Eerden and Bobby Clontz*, to a site where the woodpeckers had a colony of nest holes.

Unlike most woodpeckers, RCWs excavate their nest holes in living pine trees. Since snakes and other climbing critters are a threat, they smooth off the rougher bark below the nest site and drill shallow holes above and beside the nest that drain sticky sap all around the hole, making it nearly impossible to climb into. As a result, the nest is relatively noticeable if you know what to look for.

RCWs live in family groups, with younger birds helping feed and care for hatchlings. Since it takes a lot of



Steve Pretl (left), Helen Patton, and Sally Weschler, accompanied by NAS staffers Bobby Clontz and Brian van Eerden, track Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in the pine forest.

work to chisel out a hole in a living tree, RCW colonies tend to remain in one place for years at a time.

Our group watched the RCW parents and siblings come and go from their nest hole for most of a morning, feeding hungry nestlings out of sight. And when no woodpeckers were present, we could be distracted by a whole repertoire of spring forest birds, including Brown-headed Nuthatches, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Summer Tanagers.

We hope our visit to Piney Grove will be only the first for Montgomery birders. Seeing the birds requires the

assistance of a Conservancy staffer because all the nests are in areas of the preserve far from public trails or roads. And a large part of the enjoyment is having two exceptional naturalists available to explain the birds and their needs for a whole morning. At the conclusion of the day all parties agreed to try to schedule a visit for another small group next spring. These were life birds, wonderfully close to home.

—Chris Wright
Montgomery Bird Club



Red-cockaded Woodpeckers photographed by Bill Hubick near Pine City, Arkansas, April 2006.

Introducing Our New Webmaster

John Hays Christy of the Frederick Bird Club began offering his extensive computer expertise to MOS last November (while recovering from total knee replacement surgery) and signed on as the official MOS Webmaster in April 2010.

A self-described “Southern boy, from Alabama, Texas, and Tennessee,” John began watching birds as a youngster “on the streets of San Antonio, then at a creekside in the foothills of the Smokies, where my grandmother told me birds’ folk names, like ground robin [towhee] and rain crow [cuckoo]. After playing team chess and team tennis, thought there might be a bird team, and count myself lucky to have found the MOS in 2007.

“Worked the computer world from PC to mainframe to Web. Career in supply chain management for a major health insurer, working all sides, from operations through project management and financial computer systems. Retired 1999, some subsequent electronic data interchange (EDI) and application technical security contracts specific to HIPAA requirements; only pro bono work since 2005.”

John is an enthusiastic and serious photographer. His most exotic birding foray was the ABA conference in Ecuador in 2007. Closer to home, he enjoys the C&O Canal between Fletcher’s Boathouse and Violette’s Lock.

MOS AWARDS A DOZEN SUMMER SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2009, with the closing of several summer ornithology programs, no workshops were available to MOS—and, therefore, we were unable to continue our longstanding tradition of awarding summer scholarships. Thankfully, 2010 saw the renewal of a variety of summer offerings in Maine, and MOS was able to send twelve MOS scholarship winners to ornithology workshops.

Six recipients attended the **Field Ornithology** workshop at Hog Island, Maine, always the most popular selection. *Matthew Budinger* received the **John Wortman Memorial Scholarship**. Matthew is a science teacher at Perry Hall High School in Baltimore County, teaching 11th and 12th grade advanced placement environmental science, environmental science, and Earth science courses. A **Chandler Robbins Scholarship** was awarded to *Kim Check*, Education Director at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art at Salisbury University, Wicomico County, where she is responsible for all aspects of education and outreach for youth and adults at the museum. The **Orville Crowder/Donald Messersmith Scholarship** went to *Margy Hall*, a 6th grade teacher at Pyle Middle School in Montgomery County; Margy has been a co-coordinator for their outdoor education program and founder and coordinator for their “Chesapeake Bay Extravaganza.” *Jason Mager*, Technology Education Department Chair and a technology education teacher at Dumbarton Middle School in Baltimore County, received a **Doris Oakley Scholarship**. Another **Doris Oakley Scholarship** went to *Lara North*, an Earth science educator at the Henry E. Lackey High School in Indian Head, Charles

County, where she has taught six Earth science classes and cosponsors the environmental club. A **Helen Miller Scholarship** was awarded to *Suzanne Procell*, the program coordinator for Kids & Chemistry, an outreach program that she established at Aberdeen Proving Grounds to promote awareness and interest in science to youth through hands-on experimentation led by professionals.

Three recipients opted for the **Joy of Birding** workshop at Hog Island. *Katie Hall*, the Education Programs Coordinator for the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art in Salisbury, received a **Doris Oakley Scholarship**. Katie coordinates and leads educational programs that include on-site field trips, family and adult programs, and after-school programs for Title I schools in Wicomico and Somerset Counties. The **Eleanor Robbins Scholarship** was awarded to *Susan Muller*. Susan is a natural resource technician with the Howard County Recreation and Parks Department. She conducts natural resource inventories on parkland open space, oversees many volunteer programs, and has been involved in many educational and environmental programs with volunteers, including children. *Lois Ruchlewicz*, an instrumental music teacher at Windsor Mill Middle School in Baltimore County, received the **Frances Covington-Etta Wedge Scholarship**. Lois is helping her school to meet the Green School requirements by creating lesson plans that have children experiencing the environment around the outside of the school. This includes noting bird songs that they can take back into the piano lab to create music that represents the birds they’ve heard.

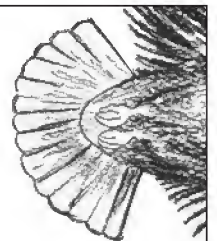
Three scholarship recipients attended the **Maine Seabird Biology and Conservation** workshop, a new offering in 2010. *Candice Doyle*, who received the **Helen Miller Scholarship**, has taught biology, honors biology and advanced placement biology classes at Rockville High School, Montgomery County. *Whitney Russell* is a kindergarten teacher at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, where she teaches her students the importance of environmental conservation even at such an early age. Whitney received a **Helen Miller Scholarship**. The **Daniel and Helen Gibson-Dorothy Mendinghall Scholarship** was awarded to *Alison Vooris*. She is a case manager at Sudlersville Middle School and an enrichment specialist at Sudlersville Elementary School in Queen Anne’s County, a rural Title I school. She is also the Ecology Club leader and an Enrichment Specialist.

Congratulations to them all.

—Tom Strikwerda
Chair, Scholarship Committee

Telling Tales

Overheard on the boardwalk at Magee Marsh in Ohio: “Some of these birds don’t care whether we see them or not!”



STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

Dense overcast sky, ambient temperature of 64 degrees Fahrenheit, and an almost indiscernible northwest breeze characterized the dark early morning hours on May 29, 2010, in St. Michaels, Talbot County. Smooth surface of rising tidewater defined headwaters of San Domingo Creek, where lights from the west side of town weakly illuminated the waterfront scene.

Approximately 500 feet away across the creek from me, a Northern Mockingbird loudly broadcast its vocal antics throughout the quiet surroundings. Suddenly at 2 AM, the short, shrieking call of an alarmed Osprey overwhelmed the entire setting for about 15 seconds. The call seemed to emanate from a dead snag just outside my window,

where during daylight hours an Osprey sometimes sits assessing fish potential in that stretch of the creek. Soon as the Osprey fell silent, the mockingbird began giving a short, loud, shrieking call with cadence and nuance reminiscent of the Osprey. Just seconds later and without warning, it began to rain as though a faucet had opened. The mockingbird immediately went silent, but close by an opossum issued a shrill hiss into the night.

Silence prevailed during about 15 minutes of moderate rainfall, with exception of a few short, weak songs from the mockingbird when the precipitation stopped. The Osprey did not vocalize again. The scene remained silent until about an hour later, when the mockingbird began to again sing loudly and

constantly. Additionally about 4 AM the opossum cut loose with several closely connected hisses.

These vocalizations raise several questions. Are they coincidental occurrences? Do they signal alarm at the presence and proximity of other participants? Do they in some way announce the impending atmospheric event or their dissatisfaction with its occurrence? Furthermore, why is a diurnal Osprey sitting in a forest area in the middle of the night, out of its element, vulnerable to terrestrial predators, and out of sight of its probable offshore mate and nest a few thousand feet down the creek?

—Jan Reese
St. Michaels

Attention MOS Artists!!

Owl, hummer, tern, wader—each year the bird design chosen for the conference pin, and t-shirt, is a favorite feature of the annual MOS meeting. What species will win in 2011?

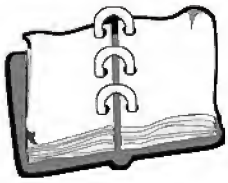
The deadline for the 2011 Pin Contest is January 17, 2011. The rules are simple: the bird must be appropriate for the conference site (WISP, in Western Maryland); it must contain the phrases "MOS" and "2011;" the artist must be a member of MOS; and entries must be in **HARD COPY**.

Put your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, chapter affiliation, and the species, on the back of each entry. Send entries to **John Malcolm**, 10205 Kindly Court, Montgomery Village, MD 20886. To see all the rules, and more tips about designing pins for the contest, visit the MOS web site, or contact John at 301-977-5788 or at smudgie@comcast.net.

A RAIL-SPLIT FENCE

Birders enjoying raptor migration at Fort Smallwood on April 18 scored a bonus when a visitor happened to flush a Clapper Rail. The astonished birders whirled around to look at the bird, which, as *Bill Hubick* relates, walked to a chain link fence and stuck its head through one of the "standard, diamond-shaped holes." Surely it was going to get stuck! But no, "to everyone's disbelief, its body compressed effortlessly and it passed through."

Bob Ringler noted that Clapper Rails had twice before been recorded at Fort Smallwood, both in late April—and the first, in April 1986, had flown into the fence. "Considering the fence encounters," he mused, "perhaps the 2010 bird is descended from the 1986 bird."



MOS Calendar

September-October 2010

Wednesday, September 1

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. Cecil. Program and Speaker: TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James St, Elkton. For more info, contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, September 2

Frederick. First Thursday Morning Trip. Pat Caro will lead this first in a series of walks on the first Thurs. of the month. This month we will go to Washington Monument SP for warblers and early Broad-winged Hawk migrants. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. Return at approximately 11 AM. For info, please contact Pat Caro, 301-845-6246.

MEETING. Frederick. Our kick-off meeting for the year will feature *Doug Forsell*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, speaking on "The Three Most Remote Tropical National Wildlife Refuges." 6 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Saturday, September 4

Cecil. Turkey Point Migrants and Hawk Watch Kickoff. Join us for the traditional kickoff to the annual Turkey Point Hawk Watch, which runs every day from Labor Day weekend through Thanksgiving. Plus, a walk through the woods and fields for migrant songbirds. Be prepared for a round-trip hike to the Point, a distance of about two miles. The pace will be leisurely. Most of the walking is on a gravel road with good footing, but there are hilly sections. Wear comfortable walking shoes/boots. Bring drinks and/or snacks. Meet 7 AM at the Turkey Point parking

lot. Trip leader: Sean "Bird Dog" McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Harford. Ma and Pa Trail. Explore the newest section of this popular trail walking from Annie's Playground to Tollgate Rd. Field, forest, marsh, and water make for a variety of habitat and birdlife. Meet at Annie's Playground on Smith Ln off Connolly Rd in Fallston at 7:30 AM. The leader is Susan Hood, 410-877-0574 or susanjhood@comcast.net.

Howard. Butterflies through Binoculars at Lake Elkhorn Power Line Vegetation Management Study Tract. 2-3 hrs. Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies, and receive expert instruction on their identification. Meet 9:30 AM at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities. Leader: Dick Smith, 410-997-7439.

Washington. Meet at the DMV parking lot at 7 AM for a local half-day trip to Shepherd's Spring, a wonderful mix of woodland and meadow near the river. Call Ann Mitchell at 240-420-0808.

Sunday, September 5

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at Mansion's front porch on Sun mornings for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Howard. Middle Patuxent EA. Half day. Moderate walking through wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. If time and birds

warrant, we will also do the Trotter Rd Loop. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. Meet 7:30 AM at the Clegg Meadow off Southwind Cir. No facilities. Leader: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net or 410-772-8424.

Talbot. Black Walnut Point, Tilghman Island for early/first migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and water birds. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 6:30 AM or meet at St. Michael's Village Shopping Center at 7 AM.

Talbot. Bombay Hook and Delaware Bay Shore for passerines, wading birds, shorebirds, and more during height of fall migration. Full day. Bring lunch, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM or meet at MD Welcome Center on Rte 301 about mile 97 at 7:10 AM.

Tuesday, September 7

Baltimore. Cromwell Park. First in a series of casual fall walks to follow the progress of migration. Beginning birders welcome. The park has a variety of habitats including fields, stream-side woods, and hillside forest. Expect a variety of migrant and resident birds. Meet 8:30 AM. Directions: at the Willow Grove Farm Entrance; follow road, cross a small bridge, and park in lot on left. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or dterry12@verizon.net

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Program TBA. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. Note: Meeting cancelled if Balt. City schools are closed that day. When in doubt, check with lecture chairman Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h) or 443-904-6314 (m), or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Indicates Field Trip

Wednesday, September 8

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Meet at 7:30 AM to bird some of the trails of Little Bennett Park for migrant and resident birds. Expect to walk 2-3 miles on gravel and dirt trails, with some uphill. Beginners welcome! Reservations required. Limit: 8. For reservations and directions contact the leader, Claire Wolfe, 301-972-4278 or c_wolfe2003@yahoo.com.

Thursday, September 9

MEETING. Howard. "The Birds of Cuba," by *Dr. William Suarez*, field ornithologist and curator of paleontology, National Museum of Natural History (Cuba). Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

MEETING. Talbot. Guest Speaker: *Tim Boucher*. Topic: TBA. Tim is a birder and the lead geographer of The Nature Conservancy's *Atlas of Global Conservation*. He is a native of South Africa and resident of MD. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium.

Saturday, September 11

MOS BOARD MEETING. 10 AM. Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot County. For more information, contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, at 410-901-1039 or janetbill@prodigy.net

H Frederick. Gambrill SP. Morning trip. We'll look for fall migrants and hopefully find lots of warblers. Leader: Lois Kauffman, 301-845-6690.

ANNUAL FALL PICNIC/SOCIAL. Harford. Starting at 1 PM at the Eden Mill Pavilion, join fellow club members for a delicious cookout featuring fantastic pit beef and other grilled meats. If you wish, bring a favorite dish to be shared. Food will be served starting at 2 PM. There will be a short bird walk along Deer Crk to work off a few calories.

H Howard. Rockburn Branch Park. Half day. Meet 8 AM in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn ES. Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available. Leaders: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com.

H Montgomery. Assateague Island/Coastal Worcester. Full day (to dusk). Bring food, water, sunscreen, insect repellent. Focus will be migrant warblers, shorebirds, and rarities such as Lark Sparrow. Reservations required. Limit: 14. Co-leaders Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton. For reservations and directions, contact Leader: Bill Hubick, bill_hubick@yahoo.com.

Sunday, September 12

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at Dusk. Join the BBC Swift-Watch Team for "Swift Night Out" as Chimney Swifts pour into one of their favorite chimneys. About 3,000 Swifts have been entering in recent years, so come enjoy the show. Swifts are counted and results, nationwide, are listed at www.chimneyswifts.org. The Swifts occasionally switch nightly roosting sites between the Hampden and Conservatory (Druid Hill Park) chimneys, so please check the BBC website (<http://baltimorebirdclub.org/>) on the Fri before the walk to confirm location. Meet 6:45 PM. Come a half hour early if the weather is cloudy or gray; cancelled if raining. Leader: Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

H Baltimore. Fall Migrants at Rockburn Branch Park. Bird the varied habitats of this Howard Co park for fall warblers and other migrants. Half day trip. Moderate walking over well-maintained trails. Meet at 7 AM at the tennis courts;

enter the park at the south entrance off Montgomery Rd at Rockburn ES. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

H Caroline. Bird Banding Observation in Chestertown with Jim Gruber, bander. Meet 8 AM. Great for kids. Adults welcome too. Contact Danny Poet to register and for directions at 410-827-8651 or birder231@hotmail.com. For those in the Denton area who would like to carpool, meet at Rose's parking lot, Denton, at 7 AM. Add'l info, contact Debby Bennett at 410-479-1343 (w) or firefly5845@hotmail.com.

H Montgomery. Pennyfield to Violette's Bird Stalk. Half day. For folks who prefer a somewhat later start to their birding, we will meet at 9 AM at the parking lot at end of Violette's Lock Rd. We will carpool to Pennyfield Lock and walk up the C&O Canal towpath to Violette's Lock. This walk should net an interesting mix of warblers, landbird migrants, and probably a few first-show winter visitors, as we scan the skies and river for raptors and waterbirds. If you plan to attend, contact Leader: Jim Nelson, kingfishers2@verizon.net or 301-530-6574.

H Talbot. Nomini Farm. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

Tuesday, September 14

MEETING. Allegany/Garrett. The speakers will be *Dr. Gwen Brewer and George Jett* and the topic will be Trinidad. 7 PM in Rm 327 Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg.

H Baltimore. Cromwell Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Wednesday, September 15

H Howard. Henryton Road, Patapsco Valley SP. Half day. Meet 8 AM at bottom of Henryton Rd at the dead end. Walk along the Patapsco River looking for fall migrants.

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Mature woodlands provide excellent habitat for migrant thrushes. This is prime migration time and many species of forest birds expected. Plan for moderate walking and possible muddy trails areas. No facilities. Leader: Jeff Culler, cullersfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006.

Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. Urban birding at its best with one of Rock Creek Park's "regulars." One-third day. Migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area 18 (on Ridge Rd, half mile below Nature Center.) Reservations required. For reservations and directions call leader, Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

MEETING. Montgomery. "Late May: Minnesota's Other Birding Season." MN is known as a winter birding destination for such specialties as Great Gray Owl and Northern Hawk Owl. It is also a great destination in late spring where you can find these owls and many other species. *Ed Patten* and *Chris Barnard* will take us from the boreal forests and remote boglands to the rolling prairie-pothole country of western MN and show us photos of what they saw. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Anna Urciolo at urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

Thursday, September 16

MEETING. Caroline. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. "Birding Cuba" presented by *Marcia Balestri*. In January, 2008, Marcia Balestri traveled to Cuba to participate in a survey coordinated by the Cuba Bird Study Program and the Caribbean Conservation Trust (CCT). This program focused on a broad spectrum of habitats, providing opportunities to see a wide variety of flora, fauna, and geologic features of Cuba with a taste of authentic local culture.

Saturday, September 18

FALL COUNT. Anne Arundel. Contact compiler, David Gillum, at 410-266-8775 or dagmapper@verizon.net for more details.

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

FALL COUNT. Baltimore. We will tally all birds seen within the city and county during this calendar day. Birders of all levels of experience are welcome and urged to participate. To avoid duplication of counting, contact coordinator, Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or dterry12@verizon.net, for area assignment.

FALL COUNT. Caroline. If you would like to participate, please contact Debby Bennett at 410-479-1343 (w) or firefly5845@hotmail.com.

Cecil. Fall Season at Fair Hill. Part of our "Seasons at Fair Hill" series. Fall at Fair Hill means migrating birds. Our walk will take us through the woods, stream valleys, and fields in search of migrant warblers, flycatchers, vireos, and more. Be prepared for a longish hike over trails that are narrow and may be steep and muddy in places. Meet at the Covered Bridge Parking Lot at Fair Hill at 8 AM. Parking fee required; Honor System in use; bring small bills to pay fee (\$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors). Wear shoes or boots good for walking. Trip leader: Ken Drier, kdrier@zoominternet.net.

FALL COUNT. Frederick. This will be our 11th county-wide fall census, and you never know what might be passing through. All eyes and ears are welcome! Tally rally afterwards at Mike and Donna Welch's house. Compiler: Mike Welch, 301-685-3561.

FALL COUNT. Howard. Please go to the following link to sign up: <http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>.

Montgomery. Snicker's Gap, VA. 2/3 day. Joint trip with ANS. Migrant songbird watching at 7:30 AM along nearby Appalachian Trail. Migrant raptors starting about 9:30

AM from commuter parking lot near Round Hill, VA. Bring cushions or chairs. Meet 7:30 AM at commuter parking (9:30 AM for raptors). Make reservation with leaders Joan Boudreau and Bob Abrams, 703-734-1238. Bring lunch, drinks, rain/wind gear. Call leaders for directions.

Montgomery. Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area. Half day; joint trip with ANS. Driftboat on Patuxent River followed by trail walk. Migrant and resident songbirds and waterbirds; Sora likely. Meet 6:30 AM at park entrance gate. Bring fee of \$5/person for park program; boat trip can be cool and a bit damp. Leaders: Paul Baicich and Greg Kearns. Make reservations (15-person limit) with Kathy Wilson at ANS, 301-652-9188 ext 10.

FALL COUNT. Washington. Contact Doris Berger at 301-739-8907 to participate.

Sunday, September 19

FALL COUNT. Allegany/Garrett. Chuck Hager will be the compiler for the 20th annual Fall Count. Contact Chuck at 301-689-5344 or drhager@mindspring.com for area assignments. There will be no Tally. E-mail or call in your results to Chuck.

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Harford. Winters Run Road. This quiet back road provides great habitat for migrating song birds and fall views of farms, estates, and the always scenic Winters Run. Meet at the Rte 24/I-95 P&R in Edgewood at 8 AM. The leaders are Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319 or larkin3001@comcast.net, and Lynn Davis.

Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. We've expanded our urban bird walks to include those who can meet only on weekends. Same great birds: migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Meet at 6:45 am at Picnic Area 18 (on Ridge Rd, one-half mile below

the Nature Center). Reservations required. For reservations and directions, call the leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

Talbot. Annual fall excursion to Chincoteague Island and Refuge for Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits, variety of gulls, terns, and always good numbers of herons, egrets. Full day. This is also a good time for migrant Peregrine Falcons. We'll also be on lookout for a good crab cake. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 6:30 AM. Bring lunch, drinks, and insecticide. We will stop at McDonalds at lunchtime and a local restaurant for dinner.

Monday, September 20

Anne Arundel. Hart-Miller Island. Gene Scarpulla will lead this trip looking for some of the 286 bird species seen on the island. Depart 6:30 AM from Parole P&R. Boat leaves at 7:45 AM. Contact Gene Scarpulla, 410-388-0852 or ejscarp@comcast.net or David Gillum, 410-266-8775 by Sep 13 to reserve a spot. Bring water, scopes, hat, long pants, sun block, and insect repellent. Limit: 15.

Tuesday, September 21

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Peak time for migrating Broad-winged Hawks if weather is right. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

Saturday, September 25

Anne Arundel. Little Patuxent Oxbow Lake Preserve. Depart 7:30 AM from Parole P&R. Leaders: Marcy Stutzman, 301-317-9698, and Jay Sheppard. Bring a lunch.

Harford. Falling Branch Road. One of Harford's most pristine streams, Falling Branch will be explored on foot with a view of the falls at the end. Expect lots of migrant songbirds and raptors. The leader is Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net.

Howard. Western RP. Half day.

Indicates Field Trip

Meet 8 AM at Carr's Mill Rd lot. Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and flyovers. Small pond may host shorebirds. Facilities available. Leader: Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 410-461-3361.

Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch Park. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents. Meet 8 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St. Reservations required. Limit: 12. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

Sunday, September 26

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Montgomery. Lois Green Park. Half day. Explore the varied habitats of this relatively new 204-acre Montgomery County park. Migrant/resident songbirds, raptors, waterfowl are possible. Meet at 7:30 AM at parking lot on Snouffer School Rd, Gaithersburg. Reservations required. For detailed directions and reservations, call leader: Mark England 240-207-3132 (h) or 240-375-4500 (m).

Talbot. Tilghman and Black Walnut Point. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 6:30 AM or meet at St. Michael's Village Shopping Center 7 AM. Breakfast hosts: Vince and Francine DeSanctis.

Tuesday, September 28

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379 or ruthec@verizon.net.

MEETING. **Washington.** Mt. Aetna Nature Center at 7 PM. Note that this is a new and earlier starting time. Program TBA. Call 301-797-8454 for info.

Wednesday, September 29

Washington. Meet at the DMV parking lot at 7 AM for a half-day trip to Blair's Valley and Fort Frederick.

Call Linda or Bruce Field, 301-797-6189, to attend.

Friday, October 1

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center. "Important Bird Areas in MD/DC: Prioritizing Sites for Conservation." *Dr. David Curson*, NAS Director of Bird Conservation. For add'l info, contact Gerald Winegrad, gwwabc@comcast.net.

Friday-Sunday, October 1-3

Frederick. Cape May Weekend. Cape May can't be beat for fall migration. We will spend a fabulous weekend at this birding mecca. Leader: David Smith, 410-549-7082.

Saturday, October 2

Anne Arundel. Huntley Meadows and Dyke Marsh. Wetlands of the Potomac River. Meet 7:30 AM at Parole P&R. Leader: Juanita Tate, 410-266-6043 or jpt8@earthlink.net. Bring a lunch.

Caroline. Bird Walk at Tuckahoe SP (Tuckahoe Creek IBA). Leaders: Danny Poet and Debby Bennett. Meet at the Lakeside Trail parking lot near the lake at 8 AM. Dress comfortably and bring binoculars if you have them. Questions, contact Danny Poet at 410-827-8651 or birder231@hotmail.com.

Cecil. Turkey Point Migrants and Hawk Watch. A walk through the woods and fields for migrant songbirds, plus a stop at the Hawk Watch station to see what is flying. Be prepared for a round-trip hike to the Point, a distance of about two miles. The pace will be leisurely. Most of the walking is on a gravel road with good footing, but there are hilly sections. Wear comfortable shoes/boots. Bring drinks and/or snacks. Meet at the Turkey Point Parking Lot at 8 AM. Leader: Leslie Fisher, lookwhaticando@zoominternet.net.

Harford. Elk Neck SF and Turkey Point Hawk Watch. Enjoy the woods and water of this Cecil peninsula and help count migrating hawks. The

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leaders are Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com, and Spike Updegrove. Meet at the 95/155 P&R at 8 AM.

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Everyone welcome but we'll target new birders and focus on some birding basics. Join us for a slow-paced walk listening for and observing common species. Late warblers and vireos, early sparrows, and some raptors possible. Limit: 8. For reservations, time, and meeting, place contact the leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.

Sunday, October 3

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Talbot. Wades Point and surroundings. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169. Breakfast hosts: Carolyn Mills and John Snyder. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 6:30 AM or meet at St. Michael's Village Shopping Center 7 AM.

Tuesday, October 5

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Speaker: *Gail Mackiernan*, presenting "An East Pacific Odyssey—or, If It's Tuesday, It Must Be Ecuador." In autumn of 2009 Gail, her husband, and two friends took a cruise from CA to Chile. Their primary targets were seabirds, but the cruise's 12 port stops in Mexico and Central and South America also yielded a wonderful array of land birds. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. Note: Meeting cancelled if Baltimore City schools are closed that day. When in doubt, check with lecture chairman Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h) or 443-904-6314 (m), or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Howard. Bon Secours Spiritual Center. 2 hrs. Meet 8:30 AM at Visitor parking lot. Easy walking through the grounds of this spiritual retreat. Woods, fields, and hedgerows provide opportunities for a variety of birds. Facilities available. Leader: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057; WrightM_29067@msn.com.

Wednesday, October 6

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program and speaker TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James St, Elkton. For more info, contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, October 7

H Frederick. First Thursday Morning Trip. Leader and destination to be announced. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. Return at approximately 11 AM. For info, please contact Pat Caro, 301-845-6246.

MEETING. **Frederick.** Our speaker will be *Dave Brinker*, an ecologist with the DNR, who will discuss "Maryland's Secretive Marshbirds: Will They Survive Sea Level Rise?" 6 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Friday, October 8

H Montgomery. Western Montgomery County Mixed Bag. Half day trip looking for sparrows, late warblers, and who knows what else. Meet at 7:30 AM at Hughes Hollow parking lot. Plan on doing some walking through wet grass in several locations throughout the county. No reservations needed. For further info, call the leader Dave Powell at 301-540-8776.

Saturday, October 9

H Harford. Rocks SP. Meet at 7:30 AM at the park office on Rocks-Chrome Hill Rd. Explore this scenic area for turkeys, warblers, and hawks. Contact the leader Dennis

Kirkwood at 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net.

H Howard. Mt. Pleasant Farm, Howard Co Conservancy. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at parking lot. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader: Scott Berglund, 410-750-2568, Business250@yahoo.com.

H Montgomery/Frederick. Lilypons Water Gardens. Half day. Please join us for a joint Montgomery/Frederick Co trip to this southern Frederick Co hotspot. Target species include American Bittern, Nelson's and Lincoln's Sparrow, and a variety of raptors. Meet at Lilypons at 7:30 AM. Reservations required. For reservations and directions, contact leader Mike Welch at 301-685-3561 or manddwelch@comcast.net.

Sunday, October 10

H BIG SIT. Anne Arundel. Fort Smallwood Park. Coordinators Tom and Sharon Bradford, 410-987-0674 or tabslab@aol.com.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H BIG SIT. Cecil. Turkey Pointers BIG SIT! Birding's most sedentary event, an international, noncompetitive birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Our BIG SIT! count circle will be based at the big cedar tree near the lighthouse at Turkey Point. Chris Starling will be our official counter. Chris will start at 4:30 AM; you can come whenever you like and stay as long as you like. Hint: if you have any goodies to bring, you might want to pack some extras for our stalwart BIG SIT! counters, to keep their spirits up for the long haul. It is not necessary to contact the leader before this event; just come on out any time during the day.

■ BIG SIT. Montgomery. Join the Sitting Ducks at Black Hill RP, starting at dawn and continuing until ??? Come for the day or just a few hours. Meet at the dike across the road from the park boat ramp. E-mail the leader, Chuck Parker, chparker@access.k12.wv.us, if you have any questions.

Monday, October 11

■ Howard. Elkhorn Garden Plots. 2 hrs. Meet 8:30 AM at the garden plots, which are on the east side of Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. The Garden Plots offer excellent opportunities for unusual sparrows, migrant passerines, and interesting late-season butterflies. No facilities. Leader: Jim Wilkinson, wilkinson8@verizon.net, 410-381-9250.

Tuesday, October 12

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** *Kevin Oxenrider* will discuss "Habitat Association and Nest Site Selection of Swamp Sparrows in Western Maryland." 7 PM in Rm 327, Compton Hall, Frostburg State U., Frostburg.

■ Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

Thursday, October 14

MEETING. **Howard.** "How Bugs Help the World Go Round," by *Dr. Michael Raupp*, Prof. of Entomology, U. of MD, College Park. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

MEETING. **Talbot.** Speaker: *Jeff Gordon*, writer, photographer, naturalist, and field editor for *Birdwatcher's Digest*. In this interactive program, "The Bird Song Grammys," Jeff will announce "The Biggest Song from the Smallest Bird" among other awards as he explores the amazing range of sounds our birds produce. 7 PM at William Hill

Manor Auditorium, 501 Dutchmans Ln, Easton. Info: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451 or coopercw@goeaston.net.

■ Washington. Enjoy birding by bicycle at a leisurely pace on the Rails to Trails path near Hancock. Time and meeting place TBD. Contact John and Judy Lilga, 301-432-2276, for further info.

Friday-Sunday, October 15-17

■ Anne Arundel. Kiptopeke SP, Chincoteague, Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, and Chesapeake Bay Bridge/Tunnel for shorebirds, migrants, and banding. Contact leader Peter Hanan, 301-912-3805, by Oct 9 to sign up.

Saturday, October 16

■ Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. See Sep 1 for details. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

■ Baltimore. Irvine Nature Center. With forest, field, and marsh, this 116-acre site has an extensive trail system and is full of promise. Expect between 45 and 55 species with plenty of "little brown jobs." Possible Red-headed Woodpecker. Meet 9 AM at Irvine Nature Center entrance. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

■ Frederick. Waggoner's Gap. 3/4 day trip. We will repeat our highly successful field trip to Waggoner's Gap to enjoy the view and watch for migrating raptors. Leader: Tom Humphrey, 301-696-8540.

■ Harford. Perryman area and Swan Harbor Farm. A spectacular sparrow show in southeastern Harford Co. Join the leaders, Dave Webb, 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net, and Sue Procell, for the beginning of fall songbird migration. Meet at the NE corner of the Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot at 7:15 AM.

■ SPARROW BIG DAY. Howard. Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12 species! Previous years have turned

up non-sparrow rarities. Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Limit: 12. For meeting place and time, contact leader: Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 410-461-3361.

Saturday-Sunday, October 16-17

■ Talbot. Hawk Mountain, PA. Overnight trip. Leaders: Dave Palmer, 410-829-3376, and Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM on Oct 16. Estimated return on Oct 17 5 PM +/- . Participants make their own overnight reservations.

Sunday, October 17

■ Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sep 5 for details. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Tuesday, October 19

■ Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: John Landers, 410-426-3374 or dado1bw@aol.com.

Wednesday, October 20

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Protecting Bird Habitats outside the U.S." More than 360 species of birds that breed in the U.S. spend significant parts of their life cycle beyond our borders. The conservation of habitats that "our" birds rely on is essential to their survival. *Matt Jeffery* of Audubon's International Alliances Program will illustrate NAS's approach to conservation by focusing on successes in Veracruz, Mexico, home to the world-renowned River of Raptors. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Anna Urciolo at urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

Thursday, October 21

MEETING. **Caroline.** 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. "Hog Island" presented by *Alison Vooris*. Alison received a 2010 MOS scholarship to attend a Hog Island, ME environmental program.

Calendar *continued from page 21*

H Howard. David Force Park. 2 hrs. Meet 8 AM at the sign on Pebble Beach Dr. Easy walking through the wooded trails and fields of the Howard Co Open Space. Streams and pond provide habitat for numerous bird species. No facilities. Leader: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057 or WrightM_29067@msn.com.

Saturday, October 23

H Baltimore. Hawk Mountain. All-day trip to see migrating hawks and magnificent scenery in PA. Depart Timonium P&R at 7 AM to arrive at the famous site about 10 AM. Bring a picnic lunch and prepare for lines of people waiting to use the outhouse at the overlook (or hike back to the visitor center for the restrooms there). Hawks can be spotted as tiny dots a couple of miles away as they approach, and some pass overhead for nice close-up views. \$5 trail fee charged by the Hawk Mountain Association, which maintains the place. Trip is off if rain or fog. Rain date: Sat, Oct 30. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h), 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Frederick. Fall at Audrey Carroll. Morning trip. Fall sparrows, migrants, and any number of surprises can occur at this lovely sanctuary. Leader: Kathy Calvert, 301-698-1298.

H Howard. Lake Elkhorn. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at Broken Land parking lot. Easy walking along the lake and to Forbay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers are generally in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Flyover hawks are also possible. No facilities. Leader: Tom Miller, BirderTWM@verizon.net, 410-795-7005.

Saturday-Sunday, October 23-24

WORK WEEKEND AT IRISH GROVE. This gem of an MOS property in Somerset County is mostly marshland with some upland and contains a house with sleeping quarters. (See <http://www.mdbirds.org/sanctuary/igrove.html>). Please come on down, help maintain the house and grounds, and enjoy great birding with options for canoeing/kayaking. Stay overnight

for free. Please contact Dotty Mumford to let her know you're coming: dottymum@comcast.net

Sunday, October 24

H Anne Arundel. Hawk Mountain, PA. The trip will leave at 5 AM from the Severna Park P&R. There will be a stop for breakfast along the way; bring a lunch. Leader: Larry Zoller, 410-987-9354.

H Harford. Harford Glen. A beautiful area with a great variety of habitat and an even greater variety of birds. Meet at the Glen at 8 AM. Contact Dave Larkin at 410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu or contact Lynn Davis at 410-569-0504 or lynnd@iximd.com.

H Howard. West Friendship Park. Meet 8 AM at shopping center just west of Rtes 32 and 144. Will car pool to park nearby. Moderate walking along field edges and through stream valleys. Small ponds may hold some surprises. Expect wet areas. Rustic facilities. Leaders: Jeff Culler, cullersful@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006 and Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329 or LBRoller@verizon.net.

H Talbot. Terrapin Park and Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (aka Horsehead). Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

Monday, October 25

H Frederick. Poplar Island. Full day. This reservations-only trip will take us on a bus ride around Poplar Island, the environmental restoration project, looking for ducks and shorebirds. Space is limited and FBC members will have first priority. To reserve a spot, contact Kathy Calvert, 301-698-1298.

Tuesday, October 26

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See Sep 7 for details. Leader: Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com or 410-557-2456.

MEETING. Washington. Meet at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center for a potluck dinner starting at 6 PM. Bring a dish to share along with your own plate, drink, and utensils.

Meeting will follow at our new starting time of 7 PM. Program TBA.

Saturday, October 30

H Allegany/Garrett. Town Hill. Meet Ray Kiddy to watch for migrating hawks at a time of year when there is still good hawk diversity but also when we may have a better chance for some more interesting birds like Golden Eagles (given favorable weather conditions). Meet 7:30 AM at the Mason's Barn P&R, Exit 46 East Cumberland from I-68. Bring lunch and a drink. Call Ray at 301-729-1972 for info and to make a reservation.

H Baltimore. Rain date for Oct 23 Hawk Mountain trip.

H Cecil. Avalon Sea Watch. Join us for a carpool trip to Avalon, NJ. The shoreside town of Avalon is on a barrier island, at a point where the shoreline bulges outward into the Atlantic—and, therefore, it is possible to get fantastic looks at a steady stream of migrating seabirds. The daily count of birds passing the Sea Watch can reach up to 90,000 at this time of year. This trip involves no walking at all. Pull your car up to the seawall at the Sea Watch site and take out your lawn chair, blanket, scope, and hot drink, and settle in for a day of scanning the seas. Meet near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton at 7 AM, to carpool for the full-day trip. Bring either a packed lunch or money to purchase lunch at a nearby deli. Also bring money for tolls and gas. Dress for possible extreme cold and windy conditions. Trip leader: Richard Donham donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Harford. Halloween Owl Prowl. Join leaders Sue Procell and Debbie Bowers as they search the Deer Creek area for our local hat-trick of owl species, Eastern Screech, Barred, and Great Horned. Black cats and goblins also possible. With a little luck some other surprises may make an appearance. Meet Sue, 410-676-6602 or procell1@comcast.net, and Debbie at 6:30 PM at the Rocks Park office on Rocks-Chrome Hill Rd.

Sunday, October 31

Montgomery. Oaks Landfill. Explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain on a gravel road, including two pond views and one hill climb of moderate difficulty. Possible sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl. Leader will carry scope for distant birds. We have special permission to enter this "closed to the public" landfill, so reservations are essential. Limit 16. Meet at 8 AM. For reservations and more info, contact leader: Mark England, 240-207-3132 (h) or 240-375-4500 (m).

Talbot. Wastewater Treatment Plant for sparrows, waterfowl, and gulls. Leader: Vince DeSanctis, 410-886-2009. Breakfast host: Les Coble. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

Tuesday, November 2

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn, 4915 Greenspring Ave. "Save the Marshes—A New Initiative by the National Audubon Society" with *David Curson*, regional NAS director in Baltimore. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. Note: Meeting cancelled if Balt. City schools are closed that day. When in doubt, check with lecture chairman Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h) or 443-904-6314 (m), or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, November 3

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. Cecil. Program and speaker TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James Street, Elkton. For more info, contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, November 4

Frederick. First Thursday Morning Trip. Leader and destination to be announced. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. Return at approximately 11 AM. For info, contact Pat Caro, 301-845-6246.

MEETING. Frederick. MD/DC Records Committee chair *Phil Davis* will return to our club, this time to describe "Birding the Bering Sea." 6 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Friday, November 5

MEETING. Anne Arundel. 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center. "Understanding the Importance of Forests for Climate, Water, Birds, and Other Critters." *Dr. Geoffrey Parker*, Senior Scientist, Forest Ecology Laboratory, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC). For add'l info, contact Gerald Winegrad, gwwabc@comcast.net.

MEETING. Harford. "Excerpts from an Expedition Notebook: Adding a Pixel to the West African Bird Picture from Coastal Gabon." *Dave Ziolkowski*, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Dinner at 6:15 PM, program at 7 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 and MD 136. For info/dinner reservations, call Dave Webb, 410-939-3537.

Washington. Visit Project Owl net at Lamb's Knoll and observe Saw-whet Owl banding by Steve Huy. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a flashlight, and be prepared to stay as late as midnight. Last-minute cancellation possible due to wind or rain. Meet at the Boonsboro P&R next to Thompson's Gas at 9:15 PM. Call Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 to register.

Saturday, November 6

Anne Arundel. Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. Youth Birding Trip. Everyone Welcome! Wayne Bell and YMOS members will lead this half-day outing. Meet 7 AM at Parole P&R. Contact David Gillum, 410-266-8775, for more info.

Harford. Susquehanna SP. This trip is especially designed for beginning birders. Join two former educators who are ready to share their skills and knowledge with those who are ready to enjoy a new interest. Bring your binoculars and your curiosity. Kids are especially

welcome. Meet at 8 AM at the Rock Run Mill. Leaders are Tom Congersky, 410-658-4137 or jnjtcon@zoominternet.net and Randy Robertson.

Sunday, November 7*

(*Daylight Savings Time ends)

Anne Arundel. Sands Rd and Wooten's Landing. Sparrows and grassland birds. Meet 7 AM at Parole P&R for this half-day trip. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-428-7567 or dy.dx@earthlink.net.

Baltimore. Loch Raven. Waterbirds and land birds. Possible Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, Common Loon. Scopes useful. Two-mile level walk. Meet along Stone Hill Rd. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. For meet time, contact leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net.

Montgomery. Lois Green Park. Half day. Explore the varied of habitats of this new 204-acre Montgomery Co park. Songbirds, raptors, waterfowl are possible. Meet at 7:30 AM at parking lot on Snouffer School Rd, Gaithersburg. Reservations required. For detailed directions and reservations, call leader: Ed Patten, 301-948-5648.

Talbot. Jack's Field Farm (adjacent to the Mill Creek Sanctuary). Late migrant birds of fields, forest edges, and marsh lands. Leaders: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169, and Terry Allen, 410-822-8132. Depart: Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Breakfast Host: Sue Ormsby.

Indicates Field Trip

LAST CALL

...for **Fall Count data**. Submit to county coordinator by Oct 8.

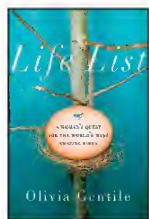
...for **Research Proposals**, deadline Dec 1.
For info, contact David Ziolkowski,
443-299-8453.

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BOOK REVIEW

***Life List: A Woman's Quest for the World's Most Amazing Birds*, by Olivia Gentile • Bloomsbury Press, N.Y., 2009.**



Birding's two most dramatic deaths were those of Ted Parker in the jungles of South America and Phoebe Snetsinger's in Africa. Olivia Gentile's book explores the life behind the second in both depth and thoughtful perspective.

The latter quality is needed, for Phoebe's life was complex, and if you ask birders at random about her, you'll meet a surprising range of reactions: high admiration for her thoroughness as a scientific observer; her courage in meeting real and intense dangers in the Himalayas, Burundi /Rwanda, and among bandits in New Guinea; awe at her accomplishments as a "Lister" who outstripped everyone in sight; uneasiness at how her family life unfolded over a half century, especially in a couple of decisions she made toward the end.

There is one other reaction you encounter, a thoughtful head-scratching when asked what we would do if handed a medical diagnosis of melanoma (a virtual death sentence) as she was at around age 50—what would we choose to do with the time left us? Especially if that fate were kept in abeyance, one year at a time, for nearly 20 years?

Olivia Gentile explores why Snetsinger fascinates us and, in doing so, lays out her life as background to her choices at its end. Born in 1931, she achieved a stunning academic success in a prestigious college, then—in the Post-World War II rush of the "Dream of Home and Family" (forestalled for two decades by the Depression and the War)—she abandoned a career path, married, and had four children. Later, when they were nearly all grown, she encountered a Blackburnian Warbler and was drawn into American birding. More than that, she was enraptured by it. A decade or so

later, after much success in listing and collecting meticulous data, she was given her cancer diagnosis.

She paused, reached inside herself, and launched into her amazing odyssey (she had family money to fund world-wide travel) in pursuit of every known species on the planet. Gentile does a fine job of conveying the excitement, the research and planning, the adventure, the suspense, and the passion inherent in her quest. One or two have tried to frame this as "obsessive," even pathological, but I prefer to see it as an ultimate extension of something we have all seen.

Phoebe Snetsinger's focused concentration may actually have "saved" her by enhancing her body's immune system. In fact, she did not ultimately die of cancer, but instantaneously in a bus accident—having just ticked off an especially prized rarity in Madagascar (a Red-shouldered Vanga) and while planning how to find another one—an Appert's Greenbul—the next day. What could have been more fitting?

We will never know for certain that she held off her cancer with her quest. But as readers of this book, we will come away with a breathtaking sense of having shared in her adventure, her achievement, her birding at the highest imaginable level.

And we may have been changed. We may even have enhanced our own choice to go "out there" after one more rarity, one more county bird, state bird, or Lifer. And we'll be more aware of the inherent value in this "game" however we set our personal rules and parameters for it.

Now, let me see, where were those Sandhill Cranes in Queen Anne's County?

—Leo Weigant
Anne Arundel Bird Club